

SPC's Levels of Risk

Risk areas come in five varieties and are based on the expected number and intensity of severe thunderstorm reports over an area:

1. GEN TSTMS (not labeled on the [graphic outlook](#) but listed in the [discussion](#)) - General (non-severe) thunderstorms
2. SEE TEXT - A label on the graphic only
3. SLGT - Slight risk, both graphic and text
4. MDT - Moderate risk, both graphic and text
5. HIGH - High risk, both graphic and text

The SEE TEXT label appears only on the graphic map. Although there is no severe outlook for the labeled area, you should read the text of the outlook discussion to be aware of the potential for a threat to develop, if some environmental conditions come together. As a rule, the "SEE TEXT" is used on the Day 2 and Day 3 Outlooks for areas where severe weather is possible, but there is too much forecast uncertainty (questionable model data, capping, moisture return, or other such factors) to issue a risk area. The "SEE TEXT" will be used in the Day 1 Outlooks to discuss areas where a few severe storms are possible or storms may approach severe levels, but the coverage or intensity is expected to be too small or marginal for a risk area. Again, note that SPC severe thunderstorms outlooks are not meant to cover every single possibility of a severe thunderstorm -- otherwise, severe and general thunder outlooks would be the same.

A SLGT risk implies well-organized severe thunderstorms are expected but in small numbers and/or low coverage. Within a slight risk area, 5-29 reports of 1 inch of larger hail, and/or 3-5 tornadoes, and/or 5-29 wind events are forecast.

MDT risks imply a greater concentration of severe thunderstorms, and in most situations, greater magnitude of severe weather. Within a moderate risk area, at least 30 reports of hail 1 inch or larger, or 6-19 tornadoes, or numerous wind events (30 that might be associated with a squall line, bow echo or derecho) are forecast.

The HIGH risk area almost always means a major severe weather outbreak is expected, with great coverage of severe weather and enhanced likelihood of extreme severe (i.e., violent tornadoes or extreme convective wind events over a large area). Within a high risk area, expect at least 20 tornadoes with at least 2 of them rated F3+, or an extreme derecho causing 50+ widespread wind events (50+) with numerous higher end wind (80+ mph) and structural damage reports.

The report criteria for each of those risks is valid for an area the size of [Oklahoma without the panhandle](#), or about 50,000 square miles. As the size of the risk area increases (decreases) from 50,000 square miles, those expected severe weather numbers would increase (decrease) proportionally.

In addition to the severe risk areas, general thunderstorms (non-severe) are outlined, but with no label on the graphic map. Within this area, a 10% or greater probability of thunderstorm occurrence is forecast.